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ADAPTING FARM WORK METHODS TO CHANGING TECHNOLOGY*

Reserve

- I. For the decade ahead, farm operating costs are likely to be high relative to farm prices even though the general level of prices remains high.
- II. Technical advances in the production sciences will provide the know-how for producing higher-quality, more uniform farm products at lower cost.
The market outlet for large volumes of uniform, high-quality products will probably improve.
- III. How will this economic and technical outlook influence Indiana farming?
1. The gap between commercial farms and self-sufficient farms will widen.
 2. The size of the commercial farm will increase, but will remain primarily a family proposition (1 to 3 men).
 3. Specialization will increase and the number of important enterprises per farm will likely decline.
 4. Sales organizations (private or cooperative) will develop to market the more standardized farm products.
 5. Businesses will be organized to bring a larger number of services to the farm.
 6. Farm capital investment per worker will increase so long as capital remains cheap relative to labor.
 7. Housing and living standards of farm operators, hired labor will improve, even at the expense of less rapid debt retirement.
 8. Crop work methods will become more standardized to improve timeliness, product uniformity and to decrease labor costs.
 9. Livestock work methods equipment, and technology will materially improve.
- IV. What should the alert farmer do about it?
1. Recognize that farming is back on a competitive basis. Become "Cost conscious."
 2. Take advantage of new but tested developments in crop varieties, cultural practices, livestock breeding and feeding.

(over)

*Outline for one of six advanced farm management discussion meetings with leading farmers in Indiana, led by Dr. F. C. Young and Dr. L. S. Hardin, Purdue University.

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3. Have sufficient volume of business (a) to keep the labor force busy at productive work and (b) to make each enterprise large enough for use of economical work methods.
4. Specialize in high profit enterprises, but add less profitable ones to distribute work, overhead.
5. Handle hired and family labor as effectively as possible.
 - (a) Pay good wages, use wage incentives where possible.
 - (b) Provide reasonable living conditions.
 - (c) Give adequate instruction and training.
6. Make investments in farm improvements be earning assets; make them help lower production costs.
7. Critically examine traditional crop and livestock work methods for chances to improve effectiveness, decrease labor and costs.
 - (a) Physical labor requirements of chore work can be reduced by 10 to 50 percent.
 - (b) Farm equipment and layout can facilitate lower cost production.
 - Get the labor and cost economy of modern equipment.
 - Be sure that all purchased equipment fits your job's requirements.
 - Do not go "gadget" crazy.
 - Locate animals, feeds, supplies, and equipment for convenience.
 - Arrange farmsteads, lots, and building interiors for good work routines and minimum travel.
 - (c) Consider production processes and practices with an open mind. Have a definite, well-worked out system of production.
8. Take time to observe others, exchange ideas, and to go visiting with a purpose.

